

Honorable Chairman & members of the committee,

SENATE JUDICIARY

EXHIBIT NO. 22

For the record my name is Becky Stockton & I reside in Helena, Montana & I oppose SB 223. 1/22/09

BILL NO. SB 223

People around the country believe that hate crime laws will solve everything and with the help of the media & other organizations each time a crime occurs against the supposedly special class of people (homosexuals, gender identity, disability & etc.) they blow it out of proportion & say it is a hate crime to support their agenda. This kind of legislation is a form of reverse discrimination and allows certain individuals to have more protection under the law than others. Doesn't our constitution say that we are all created equal, so our laws governing the people shall be equal? This bill does not address this. In fact, it creates dissension among the people & makes them feel hatred toward others because certain classifications of people receive special treatment & exceptions under the law. This bill would give homosexuals & other gender related identities more protection under the law than those who are straight. These individuals behavior is a chosen behavior, which means they can chose to change & millions of individuals that have lead these kinds of lifestyles have changed and are thankful that they did!

Regarding the disability part of this bill; my father was disabled from the age of 5 as a result of polio. He had no use of his left leg (it was only skin & bone); also he had a severe curvature of his spine. The doctors told him that he probably would never be able to walk but with great determination my father did the unthinkable; he walked. He ran a farm & ranch all his life & was determined that he did not want any special treatment from anyone (especially the government) because of his disability. He made sure to show people that he was capable of doing the same thing as them even if he had to do it a different way to accomplish the task. People respected him for what he did & treated him as an equal. Sure there were people who made fun of him, even my peers. One day a friend came up to me & asked, "Why is your dad so short & your mother so tall?" My response was, "Why was your mother so short & your dad so tall?" Well, that was the end of the conversation & nothing was said about my father again. My father always told me, if I didn't like what someone said, "Just tell them like it is & they will have nothing to say back." To me those were empowerment words! If he were alive today, he would be appalled to know that we were creating a special law to protect his disability. He never wanted to be separated out, he wanted to blend in & just be part of society. Even though my father could not run & play outside games with me, he did other things with me that made life with him special! I loved that man with all his pride & wisdom & no law will tell me that he was more special than others & if a crime was done to him that he & the perpetrator would get special treatment, one because he has disable, the other one because the perpetrator committed a crime because he was a disable person; the punishment shall be no different. My father would say, "A crime is a crime & shall be treated the same for all individuals."

Please vote "No" on SB 223. Thank you.

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